Digital Marketing Institute

ANALYTICS WITH GOOGLE ANALYTICS

Transcript

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ANALYTICS WITH GOOGLE ANALYTICS

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LESSON 1: WEB ANALYTICS FUNDAMENTALS

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INTRODUCTION TO ANALYTICS

Web analytics involves the collection, measurement, and analysis of website data.

Web analytics tools can provide lots of useful information about the origin of website traffic, how website users navigate and interact throughout a website, what content and web pages they're most engaged with, and how they exit the site.

Marketers can use this data to optimize the performance of their channels and websites by taking data-led decisions. These are actions we take to improve performance based on our understanding of the data we've recorded – that is, the data is leading the decision. This is a very effective way to use rational thought to improve performance.

While it's best practice to follow data-led decisions, we must always remind ourselves to trust but verify. Apart from helping with decision making, web analytics is an important information source to help marketers report back to key stakeholders on how campaigns and websites are performing in relation to your digital marketing efforts.

Ultimately, marketers are trying to recreate scenarios that lead to commercial outcomes for their organizations or clients. You can do this by measuring and acting on the data trends you observe using web analytics software. One of the real values of web data analysis is that it allows you to deduce the story behind the data in order to gain valuable insights and enhance business performance.

But how exactly does this lead to commercial returns? Well, web analytics can help you understand your customers better. It tells you who they are, where they're coming from, and what their interests are. It tells you about their demographics and location. It also helps reveal any conversion challenges that might exist on your website.

It helps you appreciate what consumers like or don't like, and how they interact on your website. You can use all this information to improve the experience on your site for the consumer and to optimize the channels that consumers use to visit your website.

There are a number of analytics tools available on the market today. Some of them are free. Some of them require a page subscription. Paid analytics products and free analytics products will differ in terms of support, features, and functionality. Some examples of analytics packages that are available include Google Analytics and Google Analytics 360, which are part of the Google marketing platform, Adobe Analytics, Woopra, Kissmetrics, Webtrends, and Piwik.

The market leader and most commonly used analytics program is the free version of Google Analytics – or GA as it is sometimes known. The paid version of GA – called Google Analytics 360 – offers some additional functionality in terms of report validity and sample sizes. But it's mainly used for websites that receive over 10 million page views per month. For the vast majority of websites, the free version of Google Analytics is perfectly fine. Because of its functionality and widespread adoption in the market, Google Analytics is seen by many marketers as the single source of truth for website traffic, engagement, and conversion data.

Of course, websites aren't the only way people access the internet. We also have to consider the importance of mobile consumers and mobile apps. Alongside websites, it's possible to collect data

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from mobile apps using Google Analytics SDK or software development kit. You'll need to implement and configure additional code to view mobile app data in the Google Analytics interface.

If you are tracking apps, you should note this requirement with your app development team. It's not a task marketers generally do themselves, but it should be part of the brief to the app development team.

BENEFITS AND LIMITATIONS

We have the ability to track user behavior online. Why is this important? Well, a fundamental benefit of using analytics as part of your digital marketing efforts is that it helps you make informed data-led decisions, which, in turn, should help you run effective campaigns and drive better commercial performance.

Other benefits include ability to get closer to the customer ability to understand your users ability to gain insights from real customer activity ability to forecast using trends and patterns in customer behavior, accountability of media spend and resource allocation, stronger focus, prioritization of resources, higher conversion rates, and enhanced return on investment.

Google Analytics is the most commonly used free analytics tool, and it's an excellent choice for most marketing needs. Some benefits of the standard free version of Google Analytics include: it's free; it's easy to implement and easy to install; it has a user-friendly interface; it offers customizable reports, dashboards, and data collection; both basic and advanced options are available; it offers seamless integration with other Google products; it offers post-click integration with non-Google traffic sources, including Facebook, Yahoo, and Bing; and it provides extensive valuable insights into web behavior.

Google Analytics also has a number of limitations. It doesn't provide real-time data in downloadable historical reports; the free version is limited to 10 million hits per month; it offers limited customization; it defaults to last-click attribution; it's not always 100% accurate; and it's not as comprehensive at measuring the performance of top-of-funnel campaign activities like display in Facebook where there's limited user visit and conversion data from these campaigns.

However, despite these limitations, Google Analytics is still a highly effective web analytics tool for marketers in most instances. As we'll want to know as much as possible about how consumers interact on our website and use our apps, Google Analytics can track the user or consumer journey, providing rich data around channels used, locations, and devices. These journeys can then be tracked to on-site activity, goals achieved, and exit point, as well as returning visitors, which indicates loyalty.

Gaining a return from Google Analytics data is an ongoing process of monitoring, analysis, and enhancement.

BASIC TERMINOLOGY

The basic terminology for all analytics reporting can be summarized as dimensions and metrics. Dimensions describe data. They are things like country, channel, location, age, gender, and device used. Metrics measure data. Metrics might include visitor numbers, revenue, goal completions, and so on.

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We segment metrics using dimensions - for example, visits by device type - to get a complete picture. So we can see the total visitor metrics for a website segmented by the device category dimension, that is desktop, tablet, or mobile users. This allows us to better understand the effectiveness and scale of each device in driving visits and conversions on the website.

Some common dimensions within Google Analytics include Channel Name, Month, Country, and Device. Some common engagement metrics within Google Analytics include Sessions, Users, Percentage New Sessions, Page Views, Pages per Session, and Average Session Duration.

You should explore the metrics that are available to you and see how they can be segmented using dimensions to get a deeper understanding of your website traffic and customers.

Just a note on conversion metrics: conversion metrics are an extension of standard visitor metrics. They focus on telling the story behind the valuable actions that users can take on your website. These are generally actions that impact commercial performance, such as revenue totals, conversion rates, and so on. There are a number of common conversion metrics within Google Analytics. They can all be viewed in the traffic reports so you can see how much value each of the different channels is driving. Common conversion metrics include: goals, the number of valuable actions taken on the site including sales, leads, or downloads; conversion rate, the percentage of visitors that complete a goal; transactions, the number of individual sales or shopping basket items sold on an e-commerce website; and revenue, the monetary value of the e-commerce sales.

You can start to determine the value of the campaigns from your different digital marketing channels by looking at the number of goals and transactions from each channel, the conversion rates, and the cost per conversion. With these three data points, you can decide if a channel is profitable in relation to its time and cost investment.

LEGAL SITUATION

You should be aware that there are a number of data protection considerations associated with web analytics. As a result of regulations, like GDPR in the EU, tracking personally identifiable information, or PII, now requires explicit consent from the consumer.

For example, you need to get consent if you are collecting cookie data from website visitors for analysis or in order to personalize advertising experiences. Many analytics programs anonymize user names, IP addresses and other PII, but you still need consent to share website visitor data anonymously with third parties, like Google Analytics, or with ad platforms.

In relation to GDPR, it is essential that personally identifiable information is managed correctly and within the terms of the consent provided by your website visitors. Collecting PII as part of your analytics program and then mismanaging the information can risk a data breach for improper use of PII.

To ensure this doesn't happen, your company should have a clear policy or guidelines in place detailing how the analytics data you collect is used and managed. This should include explicit opt-in visitor consent to track user visits, collect anonymous cookie data and share anonymously with third parties, like Google and Facebook for personalization of ads.

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LESSON 2: CREATING AND CONFIGURING A GOOGLE ANALYTICS ACCOUNT

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ACCOUNT SET-UP

For the purpose of this course, and due to its ubiquity in the market, we'll be using Google Analytics, or GA, as our main source program for web analytics. You can find Google Analytics through a number of different websites, including the ones listed here: google.com/analytics/ or analytics.google.com.

From there, you can sign up for Google Analytics. To access GA, you will need an email attached to a Google account. A Gmail profile is fine. You can also use your Google Ads login, which is useful as you can sign in to all your Google digital marketing products from one login and share data across the platforms more efficiently.

When setting up your Google Analytics account, you will need to add your account information, domain name, time zone, and other settings. You also need to read and understand the Google Terms of Service, and know that 'accepting' means you must adhere to these terms when using Google Analytics.

You should also note that data sharing settings must be enabled to link other Google products – Google Ads, Search Console, and so on – to Google Analytics and share data across platforms.

Be aware that there is a demo account which you can use to get familiar with Google Analytics reports and to start to practice. When you sign up or log in to Google Analytics, simply click to add the demo account to your GA account list.

TRACKING CODE

How does Google track users from your website? First you'll need a piece of code, which must be put on your website to send data back to Google Analytics. This is the UA-code and it is provided during set up, but it can also be accessed later if required. This code should be given to your web developer to hard code directly onto every page of your website.

However, for more advanced users – and if you're using Google Tag Manager – you can add the Google Analytics UA-code into Tag Manager and it will fire the code on all pages of the website.

Testing is essential in all aspects of digital marketing, not least in analytics. So it's important to test to make sure your code is installed correctly and that it's firing as it should on the website. The steps to test that your code is installed correctly on the page include:

1. Right-click on your webpage and 'view source'
2. Click 'Control + F' to find the UA number from your tracking code
3. Locate the closing head tag and ensure the GA code is placed before it

Then, double check to see if you are receiving data in the Google Analytics interface.

Another way of investigating if the code is working correctly is to use Google Tag Assist, which is a free browser extension provided by Google. It makes sure your Google tags are installed correctly by checking all tags on the web page.

While it's not essential to use, Google Tag Assist is another way of checking that everything is working as it should. In most cases, checking the source code manually and verifying that you are seeing visitors in Google Analytics works perfectly well.

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Now that you know that you need to install an analytics code on your website to track visitor behavior, let's deep dive into how the process actually works. In other words, how does the code send your data to the program? Well, it does so in the following way:

1. When a request is made to the server, a web page is served

2. The Java script tracking code is executed every time the page loads

3. A temporary or persistent cookie is dropped onto the user's browser, depending on the Google Analytics set-up

4. Session data is sent to the Google server

5. Data is processed by the Analytics tool

6. Reports are accessed later by the site owner or analyst through the Google Analytics interface

7. The cookie expires after the browser session finishes

In some instances, it may be necessary to customize the Google Analytics code as part of set-up based on the site structure. This is advanced coding and analytics tracking, and isn't required for 99% of websites.

Let's talk specifically about ecommerce websites for a moment. If your site accepts transactions, your web development team will need to set up a special ecommerce code. This code will capture all revenue, product types, and transactions, and will share them directly with Google Analytics. Traffic sources, keywords, and campaigns are linked to these transactions to help you understand the revenue value of your channels. Personally Identifiable Information, or PII, about purchasers is not shared with Google Analytics.

Of course, it goes without saying that it's important to use the latest version of the Google Analytics tracking code, and to know how to check which version of GA a site is using. There are three main types, Classic Analytics, Universal Analytics and Google Analytics 4. Universal Analytics has been the standard since 2013, so any users of Classic Analytics should be upgraded to Universal Analytics as a priority.

WALKTHROUGH: SETTING UP A GOOGLE ANALYTICS ACCOUNT

To begin measuring in Google Analytics, we click in, and then we enter our Account name, or our company name. From there, we leave all the options checked for sharing, and move on. We then enter our website name, which may be the same as our company name.

Bear in mind, we're creating a GA4 property right now. And then, we enter our location, we then enter in our time zone. And to ensure that we also create a more commonly used universal analytics type, we click Advanced Options, and then choose Create Universal Analytics Property.

We then enter our website, and we're seeing do we want to create both a Google Analytics and the newest version of Google Analytics 4, or just the Universal Analytics? And hit Next. From there, we have to enter some details about our company, the industry in which we operate in, the size of our

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company, how we're going to measure and use the data, so just to give some indications, and tick all of the boxes that apply.

And we go ahead and we press Create. Before we finish the creation, we have to sign up for the agreements. And we select them, and accept them. And then, we press Create again, and we're brought to our GA4, newest version of Google Analytics details if we want to use this version. So, it's not so commonly used yet, so we're going to go back to our Universal Analytics in the selector and choose our Universal Analytics, and we'll continue our setup with Universal Analytics in the Admin area.

Then, we go over to Tracking Info and the Tracking Code. So, when it loads up, this tracking code is how we connect Google Analytics to our website. This code here, we need to paste this on every page, or use this code for Google Tag Manager. Let's check is it in the right place.

So, here's a website here. I'm just going to click in on the page source, and I'm going to go Ctrl+F, and do a search for UA-. When I do UA-, I'm able to see that here is the Google Analytics code pasted onto every single page of the website, onto the HTML of the website. That is one way of connecting Google Analytics to your website.

Another way to link your website to Google Analytics is to use a free Google Tag Manager account. So, we need to put this code up the top of your website and this code in the body of your website. That's one way of linking Tag Manager to your website. This is the Google Tag Manager tracking code. We can link our website using this code with plugins.

For example, in WordPress here, I'm in the Plugins area. And what I've done is I've installed Google Tag Manager for WordPress, and I'm pressing on Settings. Then, in the Settings area, I paste in that ID, that ID from my Google Tag Manager Account, and I press Save Changes.

Now, Google Tag Manager is linked to my website. So, I'm back in Google Tag Manager, and I need to insert the Google Analytics tag into here. So, I press on New, and then I choose my Tag Configuration, and I choose Universal Analytics.

And when I've chosen Universal Analytics, I need to link it to my Universal Analytics ID, and I do this in the Variable area. So, let's just go back to Google Analytics, and we have this Tracking ID up the top here, which I copy. So, I select this Tracking ID, and I copy it, and then back into Google Tag Manager.

And within Google Tag Manager, I'll go down to the Analytics Settings area and go New Variable. In this area, I paste in my Tracking ID. Or I can call it GA ID, or something that I'll recognize, and I can press Save. Now, I have Google Analytics linked to my Tracking ID.

I have to tell Google Tag Manager to show Google Analytics on every page. So, our steps are link Google Tag Manager to our website, add Google Analytics code to Google Tag Manager, add our Google Analytics ID to Google Tag Manager, and tell Google Tag Manager to add Google Analytics to all pages of your website, and we press Save.

And now, we have our Google Analytics hosted in our Google Tag Manager, and what we need to do now is submit these changes and publish them to our website, and link Google Analytics to our website via Google Tag Manager. So, just to double-check that our tags are firing correctly, we can download a free Google Chrome plugin called Google Tag Assistant.

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Do a Google search for Google Tag Assistant, and install it in on Chrome. Then, you can go to your website, and up at the top corner, we can see Google Tag Assistant, and we can record and enable it, and it will show us what tags are firing on this page. So, we're able to verify that our Tag installation is working correctly using the Google Tag Assistant function.

So, the reason we used a Universal Analytics setup is because the most recent version of Google Analytics, GA4, is not so commonly used just yet. It's not supported by a lot of websites and e-commerce outfits. Most organizations are still using normal Google Analytics, so it's better to focus in on how to use this functionality before we start delving into how a more recent version of Google Analytics may perform with our websites once it's supported effectively.

KEY SETTINGS

After you have set up your Google Analytics account, all settings should be checked to ensure the accuracy of your data.

Within Google Analytics, there are three levels within settings – Account, Property, and View – and every item within these levels should be checked.

To access these settings, click 'Admin' or the cog wheel in the bottom left of the screen.

The Account is the highest level within settings and it is the access point for analytics. Within this level are the properties you want to track.

There can be many properties within one account. Usually, a website or app would have its own property, so a business with multiple websites could have one account, with a property for each website. The tracking code is generated at property level. It can be helpful to think of it like this: your account is your client; your client may have different websites for different products; each website has its own property under the overall client account.

Then within the property, you can segment the data into views. A property can have more than one view – usually there should be a raw view with unfiltered data, as well as a filtered view for main reports. There can be separate views for different areas of your business – for example, visitors from particular locations. So you could segment your EU traffic into separate views for each country or region, such as UK and Ireland, Central Europe, Northern Europe, Southern Europe, and Eastern Europe. You could also have an overall view, which tracks all visits to the website in one single view.

There are a number of settings that can be adjusted at the property level, to ensure you are tracking the website effectively. These include:

- **Default page**: This setting tells Google Analytics what your homepage is. Your domain might be DMI.com, but the homepage could be DMI.com/home. It drives better reporting to specify the correct homepage, if it's different from the domain name.
- **Exclude URL query parameters**: If you have site search active, you can exclude the dynamic URLs from being tracked as separate pages. For example, take the URL: DMI.com/search/?userquery=digital-marketing. In this case, you want to track visits to the search page – that is, everything before the question mark; and cut out the search parameters – that is, everything from the question mark onwards.
- **Session timeout length**: Sessions count every visit and action on a website, and the default timeout length is 30 minutes. So if a visitor is inactive for 30 minutes, the session will reset

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and count a new session when the visitor becomes active again. If you want to define a longer session length, you can change the setting.

A 'View' within Google Analytics helps to organize visitor data, such as origin, source, or pages viewed, into a defined view about a website, and you can use filters to create your views. Filters are more permanent ways to segment data, so you can see a particular type of traffic – for example, paid media – in one view location, and quickly understand the revenue, goals, or browsing patterns related to that key traffic source.

When we think about filters, we should consider how they can enhance reporting accuracy by classifying visitors, segmenting visitors, and removing unwanted traffic. All of this can help you understand more about your customers and website visitors.

Some commonly-used filters include IP addresses, email campaigns, country, social traffic, PPC traffic, and search traffic.

You can add a view to your website's property by following these steps:

1. Click on the Admin cog at the bottom of the left-hand menu and choose 'Create New View' from the top right of the Admin area.
2. Choose whether it's a website or mobile app view, and then enter the name of the view and the time zone where the website or business is located.
3. Modify aspects of the view in the View Settings at the top right of the Admin area.
4. Set goals and filters for your view by pressing the Goals or Filters button on the right side of the Admin page.

To make it easier for you to quickly understand the data, and to ensure it is well-organized and easy to locate, give the view a meaningful name.

Now you can add a filter to segment the traffic coming into your view. To do this, click on the Filter section of the view on the right of the screen.

Filters can be set at an Account, Property, or View level in the Admin area of Google Analytics.

Create a new filter based on a view by following these steps:

1. In the filter area, choose Add Filter.
2. You can then choose to add an existing filter, which you may have previously created, or to create a new filter.
3. Name your filter, then choose whether to create a Predefined or Custom filter.
4. For standard filtering, like excluding IP addresses or including only traffic to certain parts of your site, choose a Predefined Filter. For more advanced filtering, choose Custom Filter; however, this can require a working knowledge of Regex to implement successfully. Most segments can be created using the Predefined Filter section.

Depending on the type of traffic you want to analyze, you can choose a series of filters to create your ideal segment. It's important to understand the implications of applying multiple filters to a view, and how the order that the filters are applied will affect the data shown in that view.

Filters work by segmenting the first filter on the view. Multiple filters work together by segmenting, including or excluding traffic from the first filter, and then applying the next filter to the segmented traffic from the first filter. This knock-on effect continues until you reach the last filter in the list.

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WALKTHROUGH: KEY SETTINGS

Now, let's take a look at the key settings of our Google Analytics account. So, it's all found over in the Admin area in the bottom-left corner. We've got these three levels. We've got our account, which is our business, we have our property or properties, which are the different websites that our business operates, and then we've got the views, which are different filtered segments of website data here.

So, we are able to modify key settings like look at our Tracking Info. We have our Tracking Code, we have user-IDs, retention, we have Session Settings if you want to increase or decrease the length of our settings. And then, when we click into our property, we can set our default URL, what our default view is, all of this information that we set up during the setup.

When we have a cookie permission, we can enable demographics reporting and find a little bit more about our audience demographics and things like that. And we can Save this here. And then, we have our View Settings, where we have things like a default page, exclude parameters, what currency we want to use.

So, whatever currency it happens to be. If we're doing site search, we can put in our query parameters here, and we can just go ahead and Save that. Then, we have all these other settings down around adding Filters or creating Goals and different things like that.

So, you might want to create a new view, so we can create a view, and we might call it something like PPC Traffic. And reporting time zone will be wherever reporting is, so we just set that up as our reporting. And then, we're going to add a filter to this, so we're going to filter, and we'll go add a filter, and it will be...create a new filter.

We'll go Custom filter, we're going to include, and we know that the medium for paid search is CPC. So, whenever a medium comes in as CPC... ...it will be considered PPC traffic only.

Within our PPC view, we have, we're saying only show me traffic from PPC using that filter.

And then, our all web site traffic will have no filters, and we will see all traffic coming through to our website. We can also add our ecommerce, our Channel Settings, our content groups and different things like that in there as we see fit.

COLLABORATION

In order to collaborate effectively with team members, as well as with external agencies and clients, you need to have a single source of truth when it comes to data. In other words, you need to ensure that everyone is working from the same data source.

To do this, you can grant access to other users within your Google Analytics account and apply different permission settings. You can do this in the User Management section at an account, property, or view level.

You can add a new user by completing the following steps. One, click on User Management in the ADMIN area. Two, choose to add a new user by clicking the plus button in the top right corner. Three, enter the new user's email address and choose their permission level; you can assign a high or low level of access to each person. And, four, choose from these four permission levels.

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- Read & Analyze: this is the minimum access level where users can read and download existing reports but cannot change any settings.
- Collaborate: at this level, users can share assets, reports, and dashboards and add annotations.
- Edit permission: users can modify goals, reports, and filters, read and analyze reports, and share data, but can't add or remove users.
- Manage Users: this is the highest access level, which allows users to add and remove users, edit settings, share assets, and read reports.

There are many benefits to allowing other users access to your Google Analytics account. This means that everyone is using the same reporting tool and seeing the same data as a single source of truth, so collaboration between teams and team members is enhanced.

The various access levels mean that you can control how much data people see and need to see based on their seniority and ability to analyze data. So, for example, you don't need to overwhelm people, particularly senior executives with data they don't have time to analyze or understand.

Likewise, you should be aware of the risks of granting access to your Google Analytics account to other users, either from within or external to your organization. Potential security risks include data breaches; unintended or purposeful deletion of user accounts or assets; incorrectly changing settings within the tool; and incorrectly modifying custom reports, filters, segments, goals, and funnels.

LINKING TO OTHER TOOLS

One of the really useful aspects of Google Analytics is its ability to seamlessly link to other Google products and tools, so that you can supplement your reports with additional insights. The main tools available to link to are Google Ads, Google Search Console, and Search Ads 360, formerly known as DoubleClick by Google.

To link these additional tools, you need to access the product linking section within the Property settings. Each of the available tools for linking are listed there and you simply follow the instructions to link the tools. In most instances, you need to have Admin access to both tools in order to link them.

Let's look at some of the benefits of linking a Google Analytics account to other marketing tools:

- There is increased data availability
- Google Ads imports cost and impression data from the Google SERP, so you're not just seeing visit data
- Search impressions and keyword rank from users who aren't logged into Google when searching give additional SEO insights
- You can assess the value of channels in more detail to understand conversion rates, CPA, and ROI

The steps to linking a Google Ads and a Google Analytics account are fairly straightforward, as you're essentially sharing data between two Google products:

1. Log into Analytics and Google Ads at the same time.
2. Click the Admin area of Analytics – the cog at the bottom of the left-hand menu.

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3. In the middle Property section, click on the property you want to link, and then click the Google Ads Linking button.
4. Press the +New Property Group button and select the Google Ads accounts you want to link.
5. Next, choose which Google Analytics views will be linked to; include Google Ads data by pressing the slider.
6. Choose to enable Google Display Network impression recording.
7. Choose to use Auto-tagging to get click, cost, and other data from Google Ads directly in Analytics.
8. It's important not to use UTM tracking on Google Ads and Auto tagging, as this will double count data.
9. Click the Link Accounts button to complete the linking.

Now that you have linked your Google Ads paid media source to Google Analytics, it's also important to understand how organic search, or SEO traffic, impacts website behavior. To do this, you need to link your Google Search Console to Google Analytics.

To link Google Search Console to Google Analytics, follow these steps:

1. Ensure your website is verified in Search Console – it must be verified in Search Console to link to Google Analytics.
2. Log in to Search Console and Google Analytics.
3. Click the Admin cog at the bottom left of the main Analytics menu.
4. Click on the Property settings in the center of the Admin area.
5. Scroll to the bottom of the Property settings page and click Search Console Settings.
6. Select which Google Analytics views to share Search Console data with.
7. Click Save to complete the link.

WALKTHROUGH: LINKING ACCOUNTS

So it's very straightforward to link other Google products to Google Analytics. I'm just in the admin area in the bottom-left corner, and the first thing I want to link to my Google Analytics is my Google Search Console.

The Google Search Console from SEO. We can go to Property Settings, and then down here at the bottom of Property Settings, you can press Adjust Search Console. At this point, we press the Add button, and that will help find our search console when we log in under the same email address as we do to Google Analytics, and we can link Google Search Console here.

And when it's linked, we just go ahead and press Done. The next area we need to link in Google Analytics is our Google Ads activity. So, we can go to Google Ads, and we can select the account that we have access to, so our Organic BewT, one here in this instance, and we can go continue, or we can go the entire account, we go Continue.

And we want to link to both of these. And we want auto-tagging. We want to enable auto-tagging and then Link accounts. And now Google Analytics is linked to Google Ads here. So, you can see it all linked up there, and we can press Done.

So, the main areas to look at is Google Search Console in properties and Google Ads in the Google Ads section. If you serve ads on your website, you can link your AdSense account in here, but that's for people who are serving ads on their website because they're a Google partner.

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If you're just advertising for your company or your clients, Google Ads and Search Console in property settings and Google Ads are the two places to link.

WALKTHROUGH: SETTING UP A GOOGLE ANALYTICS DEMO ACCOUNT

So, even if you don't currently have a website, you can still practice with Google Analytics and some of the features of the reports and things like that. So, you can sign up for the free Google Analytics Demo Account. So, I've just googled Google Analytics Demo Account, and I click in on the first link.

And about halfway down the page, I have this Access Demo Account. and I click and choose any of these that I want. But I'm not going to sign up for any of them. And I have the Demo Account added to my organic viewed profile, so I have Demo Account in here.

So, in the Demo Account, we have access to all these reports here, from audience, acquisition, behavior, and conversions. We can set date ranges. We can export reports. We can get familiar with the tool. The key takeaway is, you can't break it. So, when you sign up for the Demo Account, click everywhere and explore the tool, safe in the knowledge that you're not going to be able to break this tool.

It's purely for demonstration purposes, and you will be able to just get familiar with the interface and start understanding Google Analytics reports from here on in.

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LESSON 3: SETTING GOALS WITH GOOGLE ANALYTICS

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INTRODUCING GOALS

One of the key benefits of analytics tools is that they allow you to measure the valuable actions that people take on your website. It could be making a purchase or filling in a form that becomes a lead. These valuable actions can be tracked as goals in programs like Google Analytics.

You can then attribute each goal to a channel, country, ad, or other dimension to learn more about the conditions that drive the goal. You can then try to recreate and efficiently optimize these conditions to drive more goals. In essence, a goal within Analytics is a defined conversion that allows you to measure the number of times or rate at which users take a desired action on your site.

Common goals include a purchase, inquiry form completion, brochure request, newsletter sign-up, file download, increased session duration, or pages viewed per session. Goals can be set up around areas like visitors, content, leads, conversions, and so on.

It's very important for marketers to measure their goals in order to see if their campaigns are contributing to the commercial success of their organization. This can help determine how much of your resources, time, and budget to invest in a channel, what channels and campaigns work at driving different goals, and what content on the site works to drive goals.

It also allows you to understand what doesn't work as well, so you can focus your efforts on high-impact activities, channels, and content.

GOAL SET-UP

It's fairly straightforward to set up goals in Google Analytics. This can be done on a 'View' level. To set up a goal:

1. Navigate to the Admin tab and find the Goal set-up area.
2. Click on the left-hand cog to enter the Admin area.
3. Navigate to the 'Goals' section on the right-hand side under 'View'.
4. Add a Goal by clicking +New Goal.
5. Choose to Add a Predefined goal or a Custom goal.

Google Analytics will guide you through the process. Click Save when you're done.

To help you choose the types of goals you should measure, there are four predefined or default goal templates in Google Analytics:

- **Revenue** – choose this template if you are tracking goals like 'reservations made' or 'tickets purchased'.
- **Acquisition** – choose this template for account creation goals.
- **Inquiry** – choose this template for a goal like 'reading reviews'.
- **Engagement** – choose this template for goals like adding to favorites, playing media, sharing content, and contributing to content.

If any of these goals represent an action that you would like to track, choose the appropriate goal template and name it appropriately. Alternatively, you can choose a 'Custom goal' and name it as you see fit.

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Now that you've chosen the type of goal you'd like to measure, you need to choose how you'd like to measure that goal within Google Analytics.

To do this, choose one of the following goal conditions.

- **URL Destination:** The goal is measured when visitors reach a certain page on your website – for example, the purchase 'thank-you' page, registration complete page, inquiries received page, or subscription success page.
- **Time on Site or Session Duration:** The goal is measured by how long a visitor spends on your site.
- **Sessions per Visit or Pages per Session:** The goal is measured by how many pages each visitor sees before they leave your site.
- **Event:** The goal is measured by the on-page interactions taking place on your website. For example, video plays can be tracked by installing the event-tracking code in the video play button; calls can be tracked on mobiles when someone clicks the number on the page and calls directly from the phone.

If you don't choose a template and would prefer to set up a custom goal, follow these three steps:

1. Add a goal name
2. Select a goal type
3. Add the goal conditions

Sometimes it's faster, easier, and more useful to use custom goals instead of goal templates. Ultimately, you need to decide which is most suited to your marketing activity.

The first of our goal conditions is a URL Destination goal. This is for tracking 'thank-you' pages or purchase complete pages. These are the pages that a website visitor sees after buying something, signing up for a newsletter, or downloading a piece of content. It will say something like: "Thank you for downloading the whitepaper" or "Thank you for your purchase – order complete".

Marketers track these 'thank-you' pages because the only time they are shown is when someone downloads something, makes contact with you, or purchases something. So we can measure the number of times that someone has downloaded or bought something by counting the number of times the 'thank-you' page is shown. We can set up 'thank-you' pages as a goal in Google Analytics.

To create a URL Destination goal for 'thank-you' pages in Google Analytics, follow these steps:

- Enter the screen name of the page you want to track. You don't need to include the full URL, just the URL directory name details that appear after the 'forward slash'. For example, something like '/purchase-complete'.
- This will track any visits to that page as a goal.

Goal pages are only ever seen after someone buys a product or makes contact with you. They indicate that a valuable action has just happened. Counting the times these pages are displayed is important, as this can then be attributed to a channel or campaign to measure success and/or ROI.

If you have only one price for a goal, you can assign that price as a value. For example, if you only sell subscriptions at $10.99, you can enter that as the value of your goal to estimate revenue. It's not as accurate as ecommerce tracking, but it provides an estimate where prices don't change.

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This type of goal works off the principle that the more hits you get on your 'thank-you' page, the more effective your campaign or digital activity will be.

If you want to measure how long people are engaging with specific pieces of content on your site, like the spec of an automobile model or a certain blog, you can create a Session Duration goal.

You can also create a Session Duration goal to measure sessions which exceed a certain time duration. You could use this goal when user engagement with a site is important. For example, if you have a specific blog view in Google Analytics, visits to the blog of five minutes or over indicate a significant level of engagement, which could be a valuable goal to track. You can evaluate which channels drive most engagement on your site by using Duration goals.

Simply state the time of the session in the goal set-up to measure this goal.

Another engagement goal in Google Analytics is the Pages per Session goal.

You can create a Pages per Session goal to record sessions where the pages viewed exceed a predefined number. Again, you can use this goal when user engagement with the site is important. Like Session Duration, measuring the number of pages per visit allows marketers understand which channels and what content drive longer user journeys through their websites. Simply enter the number of pages-per-session you would like to track as a goal.

For non-standard goals on your website, you can create event-tracking goals.

You create an event-tracking goal when you want to track interactions with your site that cannot be tracked with standard analytics code. This could include actions like video views or PDF downloads.

In most cases, this requires some additional coding by a developer on your website. It can also be done using the advanced features of Google Tag Manager. Once these conditions are set up in Google Tag Manager or hard-coded by a developer on the site, you can enter these conditions in the event-tracking goal, and when they fire on the website, you can track this activity as a goal.

In order to work off a single source of truth with your Google products and use the same conditions for a goal across channels and products, you can import goals and ecommerce transactions from Analytics into Google Ads. Simply choose the Import feature in Google Ads and select the goals you want to pull across.

It's important not to duplicate goals that are being counted in Google Ads by using both Google Ads conversion tracking and Google Analytics goals – choose one or the other. It can take between 30 minutes and a few hours for goals to be pushed from Google Analytics to Google Ads.

A best practice is to use Google Analytics goals instead of Google Ads conversion tracking, as you will have a single source of truth in relation to conversions. You can also import revenue transactions from the ecommerce section of Google Analytics into Google Ads. If you are also tracking the purchase completion page as a goal, you should choose either to import transactions or the purchase goal, but not both, as they will double count.

'Smart Goals' are an analytics feature designed specifically for Google Ads campaigns. They record the most engaged visits to your site.

They are mostly used for reference only. You should not track smart goals if you have other goals set up in Google Analytics, as this will overestimate your goal count significantly.

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WALKTHROUGH: SETTING GOALS

Now, when it comes to tracking valuable actions on our website, we can set up goals to help us understand more about the valuable actions people are taking on our site, like buying or downloading a brochure, or contacting us, etc.

So, we do this in the admin area, and then we go over to Goals on our view. So, we've a number of goals that we can set up. We go to New Goal. We have these goals, goal templates which will name our goal for us. So, if we click one of these, it'll call our goal after what it actually is.

Or we can just go Custom Setup, and name our goal ourself. So, we might just call this "purchase." So, our options are a destination goal, a duration goal, pages per screen, or event. So, duration, you might set up a goal for people who are spending a certain length of time on your site.

You might set up another goal for people who look at more pages on your site in a single session. Or if you have events set up on your website, a special type of tracking, event tracking set up on your website, like playing a video, a non-standard website interaction, you could set your event up here.

For our purchase goal, we're going to choose a destination. So, when someone makes a purchase on our site, they typically go to a purchase confirmation, something like checkout success. But that's the purchase page of our website. We could say, "begins with," in case there's any additional information afterwards we just wanted to include, purchase success, and we can go ahead and save this goal.

GOAL FUNNELS

Marketers love to talk about goal funnels, as they add a lot of value when it comes to understanding the consumer journey. A goal funnel is often used when there are multiple steps in a transaction process. You can use metrics to measure each step in the process.

A goal funnel can provide marketers with valuable information. For example, it shows where visitors leave your website. It highlights places where information is unclear or inadequate, or where the online process has good flow or bad flow. Marketers can use this data to better understand and optimize the customer experience on their websites and the overall consumer journey.

You can set up a funnel for a destination goal by switching on the Funnel Slider below the goal:

- Enter the screen names of all of the steps in your funnel. For example, add to cart, proceed to checkout, enter address, or add payment details.
- Don't add the homepage as a step in the funnel – just add the action pages like adding to cart or entering details.
- The last step in your funnel should be the thank-you page or destination page.

WALKTHROUGH: GOAL FUNNELS

So, for multi-step goals like a checkout, purchase or something like that, we can create what's called a Goal Funnel. So, if I click into my Goal here and I go to Goal Details, I can turn On the Funnel. And all I have to do is add the different stages of my process and I'll be able to track those as a funnel.

So, I'll just fill those in now. So, our first stage of our funnel would be adding an item to cart, and then they'd end up with a Cart page. So, this is just the URL of my cart, and then maybe it's Checkout. And

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then enter the Checkout page. So, what I've just done is just added in different steps by looking at the URLs in my checkout.

So, I just go through my checkout and I look at the webpages, the forward-slash whatever it is and I take note of these. And I have Add to Cart, Checkout, Address, Billing Info, Review Order, Complete Purchase. So, they're the different stages. You can see the Complete Purchase is the same as the goal destination. Now, these are the stages of my cart, and then I can go ahead and Save this. So, this is what it might look like when the information comes in.

So, I can go to my Conversions area and then Goals, because I've set up a goal, and Funnel Visualization. And when I'm in Funnel Visualization, when I have data, I'll see the number of people who added items to cart, moved in for the checkout, added their address, their billing info, reviewed their order, and completed the purchase.

So, I'll be able to see if there's any problems with the information here with people moving along the journey. So, it's a good way of visualizing how people go through all the way to purchase.

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LESSON 4: MONITORING CAMPAIGNS WITH GOOGLE ANALYTICS REPORTS

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THE KEY REPORTS

Before we begin with the reports, I'd like to draw your attention to the Google Analytics demo account, which you can use to get familiar with the report data and start to practice. When you sign up or log in to Google Analytics, simply click on the link, analytics.google.com/analytics/web/demoaccount to add the demo account to your GA account list.

The first area we'll cover are dashboards. Transforming a complex report containing lots of data into an easy-to-read performance snapshot is a very useful way of showing key trends to clients, managers, and other non-analysts. You can do this effectively in Google Analytics using the Dashboard feature. The Google Analytics Dashboard is a collection of widgets that give you an overview of the most important metrics and reports for your campaigns.

A benefit of dashboards is that you can share them with key stakeholders to give them a top-line view of visitor and conversion information. There are some predefined dashboards which use your existing goal or e-commerce configurations to create stylish information displays. You can explore these dashboard templates in the Analytics Gallery within the Dashboard section of Google Analytics.

Dashboards provide you with a bird's-eye overview of campaign performance. But when you want to deep dive into specific areas of website behavior, there are four main reporting areas in Google Analytics you can use to gain insights:

- The Audience tab: Who is coming to your website?
- The Acquisition tab: How are users getting to your website?
- The Behavior tab: What are users doing on your website?
- The Conversion tab: What actions are users taking to complete set goals?

Next, you'll look at each reporting area in detail.

AUDIENCE REPORT

The first major reporting category in Google Analytics tells you about the types of visitors who come to your website. This is the Audience reporting tab.

The Audience tab allows you to access audience overview information to identify top-line statistics and information about audience activity, including GEO locations and lifetime value. Some of the main reports in this tab will now be explored.

To find out about different user segments, you can look at the Demographics Report.

With this report, you can view demographics information, such as the age and gender of your visitors. It can be very useful to learn more about the types of people that visit your website.

You can delve a little deeper into visitor motivations with the Interests Report. This report lets you view information about user interests. You can look at affinity categories, in-market segments, and other interest categories that help you understand the browsing patterns of your visitors. You can then look to target the most valuable visitor groups with interest categories from the Google Display Network, Search ads, or other channels with similar categories.

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The Geo Report is a key report. It's always important to know where your visitors are physically located, so you can use the Geo Report to view the language and location of your website visitors. Use this data to enhance your media targeting and to help you find clusters of high-value customers in different locations. This will help focus your efforts on high-value areas.

Now that you know who comes to your site, you can start looking at how they engage with your site. You can do this with the Audience Behavior Report, which lets you see behavioral information about your users. For example, you could use this report to find information on new versus returning users, frequency of user visits, engagement levels, session quality, and conversion probability.

At this point, you should note an important distinction: the Audience Behavior Report shouldn't be confused with the Behavior Reporting tab, which details interaction and engagement with site content. These are different reports and they contain different metrics.

Building on the behavior of your audience on your website, you can look at what browsers they use to visit and convert using the Technology Report. This report provides information about the browsers, networks, and operating systems being used by your audience. You can use the 'www.browsershots.org' service to check how a site renders in different browsers. This is a useful report for troubleshooting compatibility issues with certain browsers.

Given the nature of on-the-go, 24/7 web browsing, a very useful report is the Mobile Report. This enables you to view traffic and conversion data from mobile and desktop users, as well as the devices being used. This is particularly important for understanding how people search, browse, and buy or convert on your site on different devices. You might find you get a lot of visits from mobile, but more conversions or sales from desktop. The key will be to find the right balance of browsing and conversion-based traffic to drive the best results.

You can use the Google Mobile Friendly Test tool to see how a site renders on mobile. This tool also identifies ways to improve your mobile experience.

As journeys may start and finish on different devices, the Cross Device Report aims to show you the overlap between mobile, desktop, and tablet devices in driving traffic and activity on your site. Once you've activated the cross-device signals feature in Google Analytics, your Cross Device Report data will populate in time.

There are four main reports in the cross device area:

- Device Overlap shows the number of users who use multiple devices to access your website.
- Device Paths show the device journeys that users typically take.
- Cross Device Channels show the channels that drive traffic and conversions across devices.
- Acquisition Device shows the number of new users by device type.

The Cross Device Report can give a good indication of the total sales journey across devices, channels, and campaigns in a mobile-first world. You can use this information to help you better understand your consumer and to optimize your media mix.

Finally, take a look at the Benchmarking Report in the Audience tab. This report is sometimes useful for competitive analysis, as it allows you to see aggregate statistics for other sites in the same category as your website across channels, locations, and devices.

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The only drawback is that it's category-based, so the results can be very broad and may not be specific to your particular industry.

WALKTHROUGH: AUDIENCE REPORT

So, let's just look at the key reporting areas of Google Analytics. We have our Audience tab, who the people are on our website, the Acquisition tab, how they got there, the Behavior tab, what content they looked at when they got there, and the Conversions tab, which is what valuable actions they took on our website.

Let's begin by trying to understand who our audience is and let's look at the Audience tab. So, there's a lot of reports in the Audience tab here from Active Users to Demographics to Geo to Benchmarking and different reports like that. Some of them are interesting, some of them are less interesting.

It's always worth knowing the Demographics of your website visitors and Google uses their visitor search history to determine if they're a man or a woman and broadly their age groups. So, we can see who they are in the Demographics area here. Interests will be Google interests. So, what Google determines they're interested in.

Geo is an important report. Where are the location of your core customers? And then in Location, we can see what are the locations that are driving most revenue or most visits, and we're able to understand that. And if we click in, we can see a little bit further, so it gives us good insights into our top locations for sales on our website.

So, we've got Illinois there, and then California, etc. So, the Geo report, quite good. Then, we can determine if they're new versus returning visitors, how often they come back, their engagement level, session quality and their likelihood of conversion.

So, all to be understood in the Behavior report within Audience. Not to be confused with the Behavior tab, which tells you what content people looked at. So, within Audience, we have also Technology, which will show us the browser and operating system. That's if you're troubleshooting things.

Another very, very important report is the Mobile report. So, what devices they are using and what is the general overview of their devices. So, in terms of mobile, desktop, or tablet, we can determine that information. What is the device type that drives most revenue, for example? So, we can see that most revenue comes from mobile.

Then, we also have some Cross Device information, Custom reporting, if we've built that in using some additional coding, and then Benchmarking, how we compare against other people in our industry. And then, the User Flow will show us how people move through our website.

Although, this is quite a difficult report to understand. It shows us kind of the different pages that people move through. But, the key reports in the Audience tab are obviously Demographics, who our audience is by age and gender, the Geo, so Language and Location, and then Mobile, what devices are they using to access our website.

So, what's the gender, what's the location, and what's their device preference. These are the core reports we're trying to understanding a little bit more about who our audience is when it comes to website visitors.

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ACQUISITION REPORT

One of the most important tabs for marketers running digital marketing campaigns is the Acquisition Tab. This reporting area allows you to identify the sources of traffic to your website in a series of sub-reports based on traffic type. This can help you to discover which channels are most effective, and which are not performing as well as you'd hoped. You can then apply more resource to the effective channels, and pull back or aim to improve the performance of lesser performing channels.

A key report in the Acquisition Tab, and in all of Google Analytics, is the All Traffic Report. All marketers should become familiar with the All Traffic Report.

This report allows you to find visitor traffic, conversion, and engagement data for different predefined channel types, known as default groupings or channels.

Default Groupings or Channels include the following:

1. Direct: 'Direct Traffic' is when the user types the website URL into the browser and directly accesses the website. You should understand the impact of offline activities on your direct traffic, such as TV advertising, as well as other factors that influence direct traffic, such as short, memorable, or easy to spell domain names.
2. Organic Search: 'Organic Search' refers to non-paid search visits from SEO sources.
3. Social: 'Social' refers to traffic from social channels, as defined by Google Analytics, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and so on.
4. Email: Tagging your email links as newsletters or email sources will allow Google Analytics to categorize this traffic as email.
5. Affiliates: 'Affiliates' refers to traffic from other websites, with whom you have an agreement to drive sales of your product.
6. Referral: 'Referral' is traffic from sites that link to content on your website.
7. Other: 'Other' traffic is traffic whose dimension Google Analytics doesn't know how to define. This can be erroneously tagged email, social or PPC traffic, or new traffic sources.
8. Paid Search: Paid Search refers to PPC traffic directly linked through Google Ads, Bing Ads, and so on.
9. Display: 'Display' is traffic from banner display sources, and premium or Google Display Networks. It generally doesn't include social display.

To deep-dive into the nuances of the different channels, digital marketers can look at the Source/Medium Report.

In simple terms, the Source tells us where traffic is coming from and the Medium is the type of traffic.

Sources include Google, Bing, Facebook, Direct, and Twitter.

Mediums include CPC, organic, display, social, and referral.

You can toggle between source, medium, or combined source-medium reporting dimensions in this report by pressing the blue links just below the graph on the left-hand side of the screen.

The Referrals Report shows 'referring' sites – these are sites that link back to your website. You can use the Referrals Report to identify the high-value links for SEO and for driving quality traffic or conversions. Factors that influence traffic from referring websites include the quality of the site that is linking to your site, and the relevance of its content to what you offer.

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Marketers also have the option of looking into their social activity in Google Analytics. The Social Report enables you to view information about sources of social media interaction, social media conversions, and social plugins.

It is a limited report. Google Analytics is a Google product and, as a result, it doesn't have a native link to other social platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or LinkedIn.

Another key report is the Campaigns Report. Digital marketers engage with consumers on multiple devices and channels, not all of which are Google channels. But you still need to track how these channels drive value from your websites. To track non-Google traffic in Google Analytics, you can use the Campaigns Report.

This allows you to report on a range of other digital marketing campaigns within Analytics, such as email newsletters and banner ads.

The drawback of the Campaigns Report is that it only shows traffic sources and onsite engagement. You don't see cost data, impressions, CPCs, or other performance metrics. For this, you still need to refer to the individual channel interfaces – unless you schedule direct uploads of cost data to Google Analytics.

To get information on your organic search and SEO efforts, marketers can use the Search Console Report. This report allows you to view information regarding SEO performance in Analytics.

First, you must link your Google Analytics account to your website's Google Search Console account. Once linked, you can view SEO information on landing pages, countries, devices, and some search queries that are used in Google searches.

Let's take a step back for a moment. Before you track non-Google channels in Google Analytics in the Campaigns Report, you need to add UTM URL parameters to your campaigns. This is done with a tool that's found outside of the Google Analytics environment called the Campaign URL Builder.

Use the URL Builder to configure a specific URL for the campaign you are creating.

With this tool, you can add your traffic source – for example, Facebook; your traffic medium – for example, Paid Social; your campaign name – for example, 'Summer Sale 2019'; and your ad content – for example, '20% Off Summer Sale'. When you input this data into the URL builder, it gives you back a string or parameter, which you can add to the end of your campaign URLs.

Understand the attributes of the URL that you can configure: source, medium, content and term.

When you add this string, it pushes the source medium, campaign name, and ad name into Google Analytics.

Be able to identify new sources of traffic from campaigns that are tagged using the URL Builder.

Then you can see the names and sources of your campaigns in the Campaigns Report, as well as the amount of traffic or conversions that are driven from your non-Google channels. Remember, it is important to use a consistent naming convention for your campaigns, so you can easily analyze performance across multiple campaigns.

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WALKTHROUGH: ACQUISITION REPORT

Once we have a good idea of who the people are on our website, we need to figure out, well, how did they get there, what channels did they use to get there? So as a digital marketer, we spend a lot of time in the Acquisition area. So, we click in Acquisition, and we can look at some key reports here.

The Overview isn't that insightful. It's not such an insightful report. But the All Traffic report and then the Channels report will give us a good view of the top channels of our activities. So, we can see our dimensions down the left-hand side here.

So, our dimensions are the words. And our metrics in the middle, so these are the numbers. So Organic Search is a dimension, and their user's number is here. So, we can see the most valuable... So, we minimize this, and we can see what channels are driving the most revenue. So, we know that Illinois is an important location.

We know that Mobile is an important device, and Organic Search is an important channel because that's driving a lot of traffic and a lot of revenue. So, the Acquisition report gives us insights into the top channels. And then we can look a little bit further into Treemaps, which can be a little bit confusing.

It shows us how the channels kind of compare against each other. It's a little bit of a confusing report. Much more insightful to use the Channels report. And indeed, if you want to go a bit deeper, the Source/Medium report, where you can see some details about the Organic Search, or different referrals, or organic from Baidu, or different channel types. So just more information in there.

And then what sites are linking to you to drive traffic. So, we can then look specifically into Google Ads and Google Search Console. So, our organic search, we can understand Landing Pages, Countries, Devices, and Queries. We can also look at our Google Ads report to understand what campaigns are driving most revenue up.

Sitelinks, Bid Adjustments, Keywords, Search Queries, what Hour of the Day is driving most activity or sales. So, when it comes to Hour of the Day, we can see that the majority of revenue is happening at these times. So, what we might do is say, "Well, let's make our campaigns active at these times and inactive at these times."

So, it allows us to understand when we should schedule our paid search ads. So, again, in Acquisition in the Google Ads account, we can look at Search Queries, and our Display Targeting, and our Video Campaigns, and if we're doing Shopping Campaigns. So, loads of additional information. All of this information is not available typically in Google Ads.

We can go up on Clicks here. We're getting our Cost, and our Clicks, and our Impressions, but we're not getting things like revenue, or average time on site, or any of these other sets of metrics here. All of this is specific to Google Analytics. So, the Google Ads report in Google Analytics gives us a whole new layer of additional insight into what the user does after they click our Google Ads ad and go through to our website, how long they spend there, and things like that.

Then we have our Social report, which will give us not a lot of insight. It tells us our top channels, Sessions and Social, has social contributed to conversions, and different things like that, our top Social Networks, and Landing Pages and Conversions.

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So, a bunch of information there from our Social activity. And then our Campaigns report will show us any campaigns, either Google campaigns or non-Google campaigns that we've tagged up using URL Builder. We'll see all these campaigns in here. So, if we've done any Facebook, or LinkedIn, or Twitter, or any of that stuff, we'll see all of those ads, all of those campaigns in here when we've used the URL Builder.

So, the Campaigns report is quite useful for that. So, we can sometimes use the URL builders in the social media platforms. They're sometimes included in LinkedIn, and Twitter, and Facebook. But if they're not, we can use this other tool called the URL Builder.

And we can just go to the Campaign URL Builder, and we can enter our details. So, I'll just enter our details now. So, I just put in my details. So, this will be the website that I'm sending my traffic to. My Campaign Source is Facebook.

My Campaign Medium is Organic Social. And I might do something like this, Facebook Organic 10%. And then if I have a post on the 25th of September talking about 10% off all products, this is the URL I used in my Facebook post, and when I click the Campaigns tab in Google Analytics, I will see how many people came from Facebook Organic - 10% Off All Products - 25th of September.

This is the URL I need to use in my Facebook post to see how many people are clicking my Facebook posts, and what do they do when they get to my website. When I name them something I recognize, I can see how my different posts compare in terms of clicks and engagement on site too. So, when I use this post in my Facebook activity, and I go to my Google Analytics tab, and I go to the Acquisition, All Campaigns tab, I will see that particular post in this list of campaigns here, and I'll be able to understand what my best posts are, my worst posts are.

I can do this for organic social, I can do it for things like Bing. I can do it for paid social. Anything that's not a Google product, I should use the URL Builder to create the URLs that will push details into Google Analytics. Those details can be accessed in Acquisition and our Campaigns. And that will give us additional insight into the popularity of our paid and organic social activity.

WALKTHROUGH: URL BUILDER

To help you track your social media or non-Google integrated activity in Google Analytics, we can use a tool called the URL Builder. To find the URL Builder, just head over to Google and do a search for URL Builder and click on the first link.

Now, when it loads up, there's a couple of fields we need to fill in. The first thing is our landing page, so we need to put in our landing page and our campaign source that's typically the channel that it comes from, liked LinkedIn or Facebook, or Pinterest, or whatever the medium. When it comes to social media, it's usually paid social or organic social and then the campaign name, which will be a combination of the source, the medium, and a description of your organic post or indeed, a description of your paid advertising targets.

So, let's go ahead and fill in those details. So, I have just entered in my landing page which is my own website's home page, the campaign source, which will be Facebook, because I'm going to post on Facebook. My medium is organic social, because I'm not going to promote this post. It's just a post out to my followers.

And then my campaign name will be a combination of my source, my medium, and a description of that post itself. At the bottom, you'll find a URL. This the URL you need to use in your social media

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posts. You'll have different URLs for your Twitter posts and your Facebook posts and your LinkedIn posts, and you'll have different URLs for your organic posts versus your paid ads.

So, what's required are unique URLs for every single type of communication we're doing on our different social channels in our different ads, in our different posts, in our different audiences. So, let's go over to Facebook and we will post this and we can see how it looks in Google Analytics. So, we'll just head back over to Facebook and we're going to do a post. Now, we're just going to do it from my own personal profile for this example, but you would do it typically from your company page, or your LinkedIn page, or whatever it is.

So, just posting it myself. I'll paste in that URL and it pulls up the preview. When the preview's pulled up, I'm able to remove that URL. So, there's the preview and I can just remove this URL and I can start writing in my post. So, let's write in a post about how to track social media clicks in Google Analytics.

Now, I'll just enter it in my post. I've got my preview and I've used that tracking URL. So, I'm going to post that now. I'm going to click in on my post and when it loads up, you can see that we have my website here and then the source is Facebook. The medium is organic social. The campaign is Facebook Organic Social, Learn How to Track Posts, and then the date.

So, percentage 20 just means space. It just means space. So, this is a type of tracking URL and when we use that URL in our posts, Google Analytics can read it. So, let's head over to Google Analytics and see what it's seeing now. Now, in Google Analytics, this is my Google Analytics for Digital Basics, my own site.

We could see the medium is organic social and the source is Facebook. So, I'm able to see when I post something on social media, are people clicking it, what type of posts are getting clicked, how long they spent on the site, where they were located, what device they used, and a whole host of other information about their website behaviors when I use this URL.

There's no need for further integrations. All you need to use is this type of URL in your social media posts or in your ads. And likewise, for example, if we want to track our paid media promotion in Google Analytics and social media, we just do a variation of that URL. So, we go Facebook, paid social, Facebook, paid social, summer campaign, because that's the campaign you're promoting, and then your targeting type, digital marketing interests.

Women who are aged 25 to 44. So, when you create an ad set in Facebook, a targeting group in Facebook, name your campaign after the targeting group so you can see, do your women ads get different clicks than your men ads? Do your digital marketing interests get a different reaction to your general audience targeting? So, by giving your different targeting groups unique URLs, you can see which targeting group clicks most often.

And when they land on your site, what do they do? So, we build our URL like this, Facebook, paid social, and then we take this URL and we copy it, and we go over to our Facebook ad or our LinkedIn ad, or whatever it is. In this instance, it's going to be a Facebook ad. And when it comes to the ad setup section of Facebook in our website URL, that's where we've put in that tracking URL.

And then, when people click this ad, we will see, "Oh, no. It's women aged 25 to 44 who drive more traffic than men aged 25 to 44." So, the men targeting set will have a different URL. Their one won't say, "Men," like this. It'll be slightly different, and we're able to see where where are the clicks coming from, where should I invest in my campaigns, what's working best, what's less effective.

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And we'll see all of this information in the campaign section of Google Analytics. So, let's take a look at that. So, we use different tracking URLs for different channels. We have in this example a Twitter person on our page coming in from paid social. So, in the final URL section of your ad builder in LinkedIn, and Twitter, and Facebook, etc., you'll put in that tracking URL.

You'll put in a different URL for your Twitter ads than your Facebook ads, etc. And when we go down to acquisition, and campaigns, and all campaigns, we can see all of our different channels, organic and paid, beside each other, how long people spend on the site, how many pages they looked at. So, we can see that Facebook do better than LinkedIn, that Twitter do better than Facebook.

We can see what's the best performing targeting types of our different campaigns. We can see how our organic posts do against our paid posts. So, by naming your campaign, the channel, whether it's paid or organic, and then the description of the post or indeed, the targeting type, you can see which channels work best, what are the types of social posts that get most engagement, and what are your best-performing channels.

So, using the URL Builder gives you a real closed loop insight into what do your consumers click when they click out of your social media networks towards your website.

GOOGLE ADS REPORT

Now let's take some time to talk through the Google Ads Report. You can use the Google Ads Report to gain insights on traffic, impressions, click costs, and other performance metrics from Google Ads. This report appears in the Google Analytics interface, side by side with all of your other reports.

By integrating Google Analytics with Google Ads, you can identify high-performing campaigns, ad groups and keywords, as well as goal completions or ecommerce transactions by campaign.

In the Google Ads Search Query Report, it is possible to view information on matched search queries. These are the actual words and phrases that people type into the Google Search engine to trigger your keywords. You can also see the position in which your ads appear on the Search Engine Results Page or SERP, and the hours of day most likely to drive traffic, engagement, and conversions. This data can be used to identify high-value search queries and the time of day for peak conversions.

As Google Ads offer multiple marketing options, it is possible to see Google Ads performance data for Search, Shopping, and Video campaigns directly in Google Analytics. All of the channel options available within the Google Ads suite can be viewed in terms of their own specific metrics within these reports. All channels can be optimized and benchmarked against each other to maximize budget and performance.

When you find out which campaigns and channels drive the most conversions, traffic, and sales, you may want to improve the budgets that are allocated to these high-performing campaigns.

To do this, identify your clusters of high-transaction, high-revenue, or high lead-generating times and search queries in Google Analytics.

Then, in Google Ads, increase the daily spend and keyword bids, or percentage bid modifiers, at peak times using ad schedules. This should drive more traffic at the most important times and from the most important keywords. In the same way, you can decrease the amount you spend on low-performing times and queries.

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BEHAVIOR REPORT

You are able to see who is coming to your website in the Audience Reporting tab, and how they got to the site in the Acquisition Reporting tab. Now, let's look at what your users did when they got to your website. You can discover the content they viewed and how they moved through the website itself using the Behavior Reporting tab.

Working out how users move through your website can be complex and overwhelming. You can begin to understand these user journeys better by using the Behavior Flow Report.

The Behavior Flow Report gives a view of user journeys through a website, beginning with a landing page, then moving to their first, second, and third interactions with the website. By analyzing the Behavior Flow Report, marketers should be able to optimize their website content and improve the user journey, which should help drive users towards making more on-site conversions.

You might want to look at the individual pages on your website, and see how users interacted with each page. You can do this by using the Site Content Report. This reporting area allows you to view reports on how you can improve your content to achieve better results from users.

The All Pages Report is a sub-report in Site Content. It gives a list of page-name metrics associated with each page.

Using this report, you can see what pages drive the most engagement and what pages need improvement. It's a very straightforward way of seeing what's working and what's not.

When trying to evaluate how engaged people are with your content and landing pages, you can look at the bounce-rate metric. This is visible on the All Pages Report and shows what percentage of visitors landed on your website and left without looking at any other pages or content on the site. Think of it like visitors landing on your site and then bouncing away without looking at anything else.

A high bounce rate can be the result of irrelevant content, poorly structured pages, or badly rendered websites. However, it's important to consider the context when analyzing bounce rates. For example, a landing page could have a high bounce rate if the CTA is to a phone, or if the information required is on the landing page, and the user doesn't need to explore any further.

Here's a useful tip for digital marketers: the All Pages Report can help to identify any 404-error pages on your website by showing you the number of hits on your Error page.

To do this, click on the Error 404 page in the list of all pages in Google Analytics. Open up a secondary dimension and select 'previous page path'. This will show you all of the pages that led to the 404-error page, and you can investigate and fix the links on these pages.

Within the Site Content Report, you can also view information about content drilldown by page and page path, landing page, and exit page.

You can view site speed information through the Site Speed Report. This data is particularly useful, as many website visitors will leave a website if it takes too long to load. That's why it's important to know the load time of your pages, and to see if it's having a negative effect on user experience.

The Site Speed Report helps web developers and marketers to better understand bounce rates, and detect any compatibility issues with browser types. It also helps them improve the overall web experience.

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The Page Timings Report is a sub-report in Site Speed that contains information on page views and the average load times for the various pages on a site.

Furthermore, the Speed Suggestions sub-report allows you to view speed improvement suggestions for pages on your site, while the User Timings sub-report allows you to view the average user timings on a site.

If you have a search bar on your website, then the Site Search Report could prove to be useful. The Site Search Report allows you to view the search terms visitors used. You can configure Site Search within the property settings by entering the query string for your website search feature.

Site Search is a useful data mining tool, as it allows you to track what users are typing into the search bar on your website. You can use this information to expand your keyword pool or to gain insight into what your website visitors are specifically looking for, which in turn can inform site improvements and even new product development.

WALKTHROUGH: BEHAVIOR REPORT

So, now that we have a good idea of who our audience is, how they got to our website, we might want to look at, well, what's the most popular content on our website? So, we can discover what's their behavior when they hit our website from the Behavior report.

So, in here, we've got our Overview, a different flow of behavior through our site, so how people are moving through our site. We can see the different pages they move through. Quite an important report is the Site Content report, and then the All Pages report. This will tell us the most popular pages on our website.

So, it's always good to know what our most popular pages are. We can see them all being listed here. There's 765 pages, we can expand that out and see what's the most important, what are the most visited pages on our website, and what are the other metrics associated with those pages. We can look at top Landing Pages, we can drill down into Content and look at what are the pages people typically leave the site on.

So, the Site Content part of the Behavior report is very important. We also have some information around Site Speed, so we can improve site speed, our Page Timings and Suggestions and our User Timing. So, we have a good view of Site Speed here from Google Analytics. If we have Site Search setup, we can look at the keywords that people are using to search on our site, how often people are searching on our site, and the different search pages that they use.

If we have additional non-standard events tagged up on our website using either Google Tag Manager or getting a developer to add tags to our website, we can look at the Top Events on our website. So, we look at an Overview. So, we've got Ecommerce events and then Contact Us events.

So, what are the top events that Google have set up on their site? So, if I click into Advanced Ecommerce, I'll be able to see people have added to cart, and looked at a click, and removed from cart, and clicked on promotion, and I can see these different events that have been set up.

Sometimes when you use an ecommerce platform like Shopify or WooCommerce, all those events are automatically coded into the system and you don't have to do it. But, if you want to add additional events like people playing a video or things like that, you might need your developer to set that up. When you have set them up, of course, you can see them in the Events report.

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If you happen to be a website that serves ads on your website, so you are a partner of Google, you can get Publisher reports here, and then there is some information, legacy information on running A/B tests using Google Analytics. But, we're better off using a tool like Google Optimize for any kind of A/B testing.

So again, the Behavior report really, the most important area is Site Content and All Pages, and that will tell us the most popular pages on our website.

EVENTS REPORT

Digital marketers can use event tracking to track the non-standard actions that people take on their websites - actions like pressing the Play button on a video or clicking a button. Neither of these actions generates a 'Thank You' page, so they can't be tracked using standard goal setup methods. However, these events are important, so they need to be tracked using another method. This method is called event tracking, and it requires additional setup or coding to implement.

The events report records how users interact with various elements of your website. This report will automatically track any Google Analytics events you've set up in your website code or through Google Tag Manager.

A benefit of event tracking is that it provides valuable insights into how your users are interacting with your website and content. For example, it shows if they're clicking through to emails or external links; downloading brochures, guides, or PDFs; viewing or partially viewing videos; and more. These insights can inform your website copy and layout, CTAs, and wider content strategies.

As event tracking is tracking non-standard actions, it requires some additional setup. To set up event tracking, you will need to ask your web developer to insert a piece of code into the item that you want to track, such as a Play button on a video or some other piece of functionality. Ask the developer to push two essential Google Analytics variables when someone clicks or scrolls. These variables are eventCategory and eventAction. You might also want to include two other optional pieces of code: eventLabel and eventValue.

Once the developer sets the website to push these pieces of code to Google Analytics - when, for example, someone presses the Play button - Google Analytics will pick up the data and record the event in the reports.

As with all of your data tracking and planning, it is important to be consistent in the naming conventions you use so that you can easily view event performance via the category, action, or label reports.

You can view website events overview information through the overviews subreport. This report shows information on any event types and values you have coded into your website in one single view. If there are no events coded into your website, no data will appear here.

Once everything is tracked via the website code or using Google Tag Manager, you can view top events to see the most common events on your website.

Another non-standard feature of Google Analytics is the Experiments feature. This allows digital marketers to view and manage A/B tests for page performance. You can use this feature to test new layouts, content types, and formats, and to measure them against KPIs. To use this feature, follow the setup guide in experiments.

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Then you can set up test landing pages on your website subdomain and dynamically serve them to website visitors to test engagement or conversion data. You can also set the length of the test and the percentage of visitors to be tested. When the test is complete, you will have a data table indicating whether the original or the test pages performed better. With this data, you can decide whether to introduce a new landing page or to stick with the original.

CONVERSION REPORT

You can use the Conversions Reporting Tab in Google Analytics to focus in on metrics relating to the valuable actions that users can take on your website. You can find out if you are meeting, exceeding, or missing your KPIs by using this reporting section.

KPIs can differ, depending on the type of business. For example, ecommerce KPIs typically include sales transactions, AOV, ecommerce conversion rates, cart abandonment rates, and repeat purchases. Non-ecommerce KPIs for lead-generation sites might include cost per lead, total leads, trial sign-ups, conversion rates, unique leads, and comments submitted. All of these KPIs can be tracked and measured in the Conversions Tab.

Now, let's look at the Goals reporting area. The Goals reporting area can help you understand different goal-conversion rates over a particular timeframe. This, in turn, can help you to understand trends and how to optimize performance.

You can view goal overview information through the Goals Overview Report in the Conversions tab.

You can also view the goal URLs you have set up in the Goal URLs Report. Reviewing this report periodically allows you to quickly check that all of your goals are tracking the URLs you expect them to track.

The Funnel Visualization Report is another report found in the Goals reporting area. This report should be set up during goal creation. It's very straightforward to use and it provides information about the various stages of the conversion process.

For example, you can track the flow through the different steps in the purchase journey, such as selecting a product, adding it to the cart, entering name and address, entering payment details, and confirming purchase.

If there is a drop-off at any point, you can investigate why, and then try to improve the user journey to get more people to convert.

A key benefit of the Funnel Visualization Report is that it allows marketers and web developers to look at the different stages of the conversion process as a goal funnel, which can help them enhance user experience and increase conversion rates through funnel optimization techniques and tests.

You can view goal flow information in the Goal Flow Report. This report shows the path your traffic travelled through a funnel towards a goal conversion. It allows marketers to see the source, medium, page, or other dimension that leads up to the goals set in Google Analytics.

The E-commerce Report in Google Analytics enables you to view ecommerce overview information, shopping behavior, checkout behavior, product performance, sales performance, and product list performance.

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The E-commerce Report requires certain specialist coding to link your website transactions to Google Analytics. But you don't need to be a coder to implement ecommerce tracking on many retail platforms.

Many out-of-the box ecommerce solutions, like WooCommerce, Magento, and Shopify have a user-friendly way of linking to Google Analytics. In most cases, you simply enter the Google Analytics UA code and tick a box in the ecommerce tool to link to Google Analytics. However, if you have built your own ecommerce engine, you will need your developer to add the specialist ecommerce code. But this is only for bespoke sites; most sites will do it automatically. Check to see if yours is a bespoke or out-of-the-box ecommerce site to determine what actions you need to take.

The E-commerce Report is an excellent way to track revenue online and attribute it back to channels. It also contains details regarding transaction and product types, so you can understand which channels drive what transactions and order values. The report gives you insight into the time it takes to purchase a product, from first visit to sale, as well as details about transactions, sales, and product performance. It's possible to apply enhanced ecommerce settings to ecommerce stores, to assess other detailed ecommerce metrics, like discounts.

Within the E-commerce Report, it's possible to dive further into the traffic sources that drive sales, so you can focus your efforts on those channels that efficiently drive the most sales. You could also aim to improve channels that are less effective and pull back completely on poorer performing channels.

Furthermore, once ecommerce is set up on your site, revenue and transaction data will be available in most Google Analytics reports, so you can review many other data points and reports in relation to revenue value.

For example, in the channels reports, it's possible to check how much revenue was driven by each channel.

Likewise, within page and content reports, we can see metrics like revenue per page, which estimates how much revenue could be attributed to a page, based on how often and where it appears in the conversion journey.

WALKTHROUGH: CONVERSIONS REPORT

So now that we understand who our audience is and who the people are in our website, how they got to our website via our campaigns or organic activity, what they did in terms of content engagement on our website, we want to look at the valuable actions they've taken on our website.

So this is the Conversions tab where we can understand our goals, first of all. So any goals that we have set up, we can look the overview of the goals, and we can look at the different types of goals that we have set up, and understand how many completions and where they've been completed and the source medium.

We can look at our funnel. If we'd set up a funnel, we can look at that in here. So I have the cart, billing and shipping payment, review, purchase completed. We can look at this. So we can clearly see that lots of people are going to billing and shipping, but lots of people are leaving at the payment stage. So what this would tell me is there's a problem at the payment stage, at the critical point of the checkout.

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Definitely worth checking. And our goal flow is similar, but it's just on its side. So it moves from left, right, and it's the funnel that just moves from left to right, essentially. And then that's our goals area. If we're an ecommerce site and we have Google Analytics linked to our ecommerce store, we can get a good view of the revenue.

So here we can see, in the Google Analytics demo account, the revenue coming through, the ecommerce conversion rate, the number of transactions, the average order value. Lots of information. The top products. We can look at our product performance to see what our best products are. We can look at sales performance, and different lists and checkout behavior. There are lots of different information that we can glean.

So we can understand this is quite a popular purchase here because it's driving the most revenue, and we've got other ones here, so. Now bear in mind, we can also look at, if we go to Acquisition, All Traffic and Channels. We can also see revenue on a channel level down here.

And likewise, with audience, we can maybe look at our age, and we can see revenue by age group. So we can sort by revenue by age group. This is the most popular age group.

And likewise, we can do it by gender. We can do it by mobile. So it's always worth knowing in our overview area what device is driving the most revenue. So when I sort by revenue, I can see mobile is the most important. This will determine my media strategy in terms of what devices I target on Facebook, on LinkedIn.

Likewise, we can understand our top locations by revenue. So, Geo. Where are our top locations? So what devices, what locations, and what gender and age is our top purchasers? And that's really valuable information when you're trying to determine your demographic target. Again, social media, your location targeting in your campaigns, and your device targeting in your campaigns, too.

So not only do we have revenue information on our channels and in our audience, we can also see additional information here in the ecommerce area of Google Analytics. So we just need to link our Google Analytics to our ecommerce platform.

So standard ones like Shopify and WooCommerce and all that, all you have to do is enter your Google Analytics code, and that will do all the linking for you. If you're not using one of those tools, you might need a developer to help you link Google Analytics to your website for ecommerce purposes. And another part of our Conversions area is our Multi-Channel Funnels, a very interesting area where we're able to see things like Assisted Conversions and Top Funnel Paths, and the Time Lag, and the Path Length.

So Assisted Conversions will tell you what channels helped in driving conversions. So what channels assisted in convincing people that they should buy. Top Conversion Paths, very interesting report, will show you the typical paths that people take to a purchase. So we can set it up at just ecommerce purchases, for example, and we can see the top paths.

So paid search, and then direct, and we can see these are the journeys people are typically taking before they make a purchase. So that's what the Top Paths will do. Likewise, the Time Lag will tell us how long did it take between when they first hit the website and they bought. So most people buy on the same day. Some people take one day, some people take two days.

So what is the typical length of time between their first visit and their end purchase. We're also able to see things like the usual path length, how many steps in the journey. And then if we want to do things like compare different attribution models, we're able to do that in here.

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So last leg attribution, meaning, the last channel before the person buys, gets all the credit for the purchase. Maybe we can compare this to the first channel. So we can compare this to other channels, and this is a good way of understanding how your channels stack up in terms of driving the first click or driving the last click before conversion.

And this is a good way to understand how channels work together in a multi-channel funnel way to see how your whole omnipart channel strategy is driving sales, conversions, and leads for you and your business.

MULTI-CHANNEL FUNNELS REPORT

To help you understand the complex nature of a digital marketing conversion or purchase journey across channels, you can use the Multi-Channel Funnels Report. It assigns a value to each channel that played a role in completing a goal or transaction. This allows you to see what each channel contributed to a purchase or goal, and helps you understand its value in the decision-making process. Once you know how much a channel contributes, and where it is most effective in the user journey, you can optimize that channel for success.

In digital marketing, there are closing channels and assisting channels. Closing channels are the channels used just before a goal or transaction is completed. Some examples include PPC, SEO, direct email, or remarketing.

However, consumers use numerous channels as they move along their paths to purchase, and these are known as assisting channels. Some examples of assisting channels are display, social media, video, and other top-of-funnel awareness and consideration-driving channels.

The Assisted Conversion Report can help you understand the assisted value of channels and campaigns, and provides insight into how different channels function at each end of the funnel, from awareness to completed conversion.

For a very useful visualization of the typical journeys that consumers make on their paths to purchase, we can use the Top Conversion Paths Report within the Multi-Channel Funnels Report. This report provides more granular insight into the most popular journeys users take to conversion.

It shows the numerous steps and channels that drive conversions or transactions online. In this way, you can identify your opening and assisting channels, as well as your closing channels, in a visual and shareable way.

You can also view time lag and path length information.

Time lag reporting can help you understand how long it takes for a consumer to commit to purchase or signup, by showing the length of time between their first visit to your site and the day they complete a conversion.

We have been talking about how channels interact with each other to drive conversions and sales, so we can assign credit to each channel along the journey for the part it played in the decision-making process. This is called attribution.

There are different models you can use to understand the value of your channels. By default, Google Analytics is set to ‘Last Click’ attribution, where the final channel before the conversion gets all the credit. However, there are a number of other attribution models that can be used, including Last Click, First Click, Linear, Time Decay, and Position-based.

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There are many models to choose from, but none are perfect. The model you choose should be unique to your business, and should depend on your website goals and KPIs. It's worth testing how your channels look with each model, to see which tells your consumer story most effectively.

To help you understand which models might be best applied to your activity, you can use the Attribution Report. This report contains a Model Comparison Tool. You can use this tool to view the value given to each channel in the path to conversion, based on the model chosen. It allows you to see what channels would look like if you applied different attribution models to them.

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LESSON 5: ANALYZING AND RECORDING GOOGLE ANALYTICS DATA

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ANALYZING DATA

A nice feature in Google Analytics is the real-time reporting function. This provides a live snapshot of activity on your website related to visitors, content, traffic sources, and goals. It's very useful when you want to get a real-time view of campaign launches, TV appearances, and other activities that might have an immediate impact on traffic volumes.

However, it's not useful for historical reporting, because it only shows data in real time and it can't be downloaded. It just gives a view on what's happening right now.

Understanding traffic spikes both in real time and in reports can allow marketers to understand the ROI of awareness-generating activities like TV, print, and radio. By evaluating how many additional conversions, goals, or sales occurred as a result of a traffic spike, versus the cost of generating that traffic using offline channels, it is possible for marketers to assign an ROI value to their offline marketing investment.

To help draw your attention to anomalies and spikes in unusual behavior, you can use the Intelligence Events feature. This sends an automated alert after there is a traffic spike or significant change in metrics, and it can alert you to larger-scale changes in your website's behavior.

WALKTHROUGH: REALTIME AND DASHBOARDS

So while there's a lot of standard reports in Google Analytics and you can download any of the data from these reports here, we also have this real time report which shows us who is on the site right now, who's on the site right now and what they're doing.

So, we can look at the different locations there, it'll tell us about spikes in traffic, but this is not a downloadable report. It'll just tell us who's on the site right now. It's not the most insightful report, it just gives us an indication for who's on our website right now. Now, what we might want to do is do some customization, and one of the things we can do is create nice dashboards.

So let's create a dashboard here. We'll go, Dashboard and Customization and we'll create a dashboard. So let's go with blank canvas and we'll call it whatever we want to call it. Now, the first thing we'll do is we will have a to own metric, and we will say, "We want to show the number, or the amount of revenue."

So, I'll just look for revenue and I'll just call this... So, that's the first part of our dashboard. Total revenue is there. We'll add another widget. We want to know how are people getting there? So, we add a table and a dimension.

Our first dimension might be something like channel, so I'm just typing in channels, and I get default channel grouping. And I want to know the number of visitors, which is users. And I can leave it to 10 rows and I can call this... So we can just drag this over here to where the top channels, and then maybe we'll go and add another widget.

So, pie chart, and we'll put in users. We can just create these kind of dashboards and have this nice view and just add maybe whatever additional widgets that we want. We might add in a map, and we'll put in...

And we can just create this nice dashboard and go ahead and save it. And of course, this could be exported or emailed or shared as we see fit.

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CUSTOM REPORTS, ANNOTATIONS, AND SEGMENTS

There are a lot of predefined reports in Google Analytics, but there may come a time when the standard reports won't fit your needs. When this happens, you have the ability to create custom reports in Google Analytics.

With custom reports, you can create your own reports using a mixture of dimensions and variables. You can set these reports to only look at certain pages or channels, using filters.

Don't be afraid of creating custom reports. Remember, creating a new custom report won't break anything in Google Analytics; it simply allows you to see specific data and metrics filtered in a report that fits your needs.

There are three types of custom report, which you can set up in the Customization tab in the main menu. To create a custom report, choose Customization and then Reports from the left-hand menu.

- Flat Table Reports allow you to have your dimensions on the left and metrics across the top in table format – these are the simplest type of custom report.
- Explorer Reports allow you to click into dimensions for further detail on the metrics – these reports are more complicated.
- Map Overlay Reports allow you to view a world or location map with a series of metrics you define.

In digital marketing we launch a lot of campaigns, make a lot of changes, and optimize our activity continually – be it over the course of a few weeks, months, or the entire year. As a result, when we look back, we simply won't be able to remember everything we've done and when. Luckily, we can use Annotations to help us track or record our offline activity.

Annotations are small, written notes that appear as speech bubbles at the base of Google Analytics graphs. It's very easy to add an annotation. Simply press the triangle below the graph and click the new annotation button. Then, enter the details of your note. Mark it as public or private and press ‘Save’. Now you will have a written record of what happened on a particular day, which you can look back on to see if it impacted traffic data over time.

For example, you can add notes about campaign launches, sites going down, or promotional offers, as they happen. Then, when you are reviewing the traffic to your site later, and wondering what caused a spike or a drop, an annotation relating to an event might provide insight into why it happened.

Leave yourself notes for all major or impactful changes to your digital marketing plan, as well as for external events that might have an impact. It's a great way of leaving a written historical record of your year's work for you to review as you need.

Alongside customization, it’s possible to further segment your data. You can use Secondary Dimensions to do this. These are additional fields which can be added to standard or custom reports to get deeper insights into your data and trends.

A more powerful way of segmenting report data is by using Custom Segments to modify the data you are viewing across all the reports in Google Analytics. Custom Segments are temporary filters

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that are used to cut up data for deeper understanding and for making comparisons. It's important to note that Custom Segments differ from view filters.

Filters are applied to a view and are constantly active in segmenting your data. However, Custom Segments are temporary filters, which you can apply to data to understand how it looks under different segment conditions. They can be removed after use and the data will return to normal.

Custom Segments can be used in conjunction with Google Ads to help marketers make informed decisions about optimization. Try creating custom segments for your most important customer and conversion groups, as they are very powerful ways of getting insights from your data segments.

While all data can be presented, cut, spliced, and segmented on screen, much of the real data analysis happens when you export the reports. In Google Analytics and all other web analysis programs, it is possible to export and schedule all reports into Excel spreadsheets, Google Sheets, and PDFs for sharing and further analysis.

The majority of marketers use Excel or another spreadsheet tool for most of their analysis and data manipulation. You should use the format that works best for you.

WALKTHROUGH: CUSTOMIZATION, ANNOTATIONS, AND SEGMENTS

If we want to create our own reports in Google Analytics, we can go to the Customization area and we can go to Custom Reports. In Custom Reports, we can choose to create a New Custom Report. We're presented with three options, Explorer, Flat Table, or Map Overlay.

Flat Table is probably the most straightforward one to use, so we'll call this Flat Table report and then we'll choose our Dimensions and our Metrics. So, what dimensions do we want? We might want to know our Device Category and our Region and our Gender.

And then we might want to know Users or the visits, and then Revenue. And whatever metrics we want, we can just put in here. And we can say only show us Country United States. And we can call this something like and we can go ahead and save this report.

And then we'll see the revenue, the region, the gender of these users here, and we can sort this out.

So maybe we'll extend our date range a little bit further, get some more information. And we can see that mobile, California, female is our top. And it just gives us an idea of what devices, locations and genders we should be targeting when it comes to our advertising campaign. So, building your own report using Dimensions and Metrics allows you to decide what are the things you want to report on in Google Analytics.

So, all of this is found in the Custom Reports area, and we're using Flat Table. So, when I want to make a note of some activity that has happened on my website or something like that, I can leave myself a little annotation underneath any of the line charts.

So, if I go to All Traffic and Channels, press this upside-down triangle underneath any line chart, go Create new annotation, and we set our date. So, it might be the 1st of September, and we can say something like that. Save that there, and we'll see a list of all of the different actions that we've taken over the year with these little speech bubbles.

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And we can say, "Oh, that's why there's a spike." And that's what these are useful for. We can see this here. Very handy for reminding ourselves of the things that we do. We're also able to quickly add some additional dimensions to our activity. And we can do this with the Secondary dimensions area here. And we might go Device Category.

And what this does is on the fly quickly split our report up. So, we're doing Organic Search, and we can see the desktop traffic, we can see the mobile traffic. And we're just getting a split of the different channels here by their device type.

So, it's a kind of on-the-fly way of just adding some additional insight into your reports. So that's secondary dimensions. Another way to get some insights into your reports is to add segments. So, these are temporary filters that we can create. So, if I add a segment, I might create a segment. There are some predefined ones in here, but I might create a New Segment, and say I want to see when it's just Female.

And this will show me female visitors, and I can compare this All Users, for example, or indeed Male visitors. So, I'll call this and Save that there. Of women versus men revenue across here.

TRACKING DATA EFFECTIVELY

Let's take some time to look at the best practices for using Google Analytics, so you know you have all bases covered.

Firstly, tracking. You need to confirm that the Analytics tracking code is applied across every page. You also need to ensure that it has been customized to cover all relevant domains, so you can track customer interaction with your website, e-commerce transactions, and so on.

You also need to confirm that different views are implemented in order to maximize Google Analytics tracking capabilities. Useful views include time zone, default page, currency, Google Ads cost source, and site-search tracking.

You shouldn't track visits from inside your company or from your partners as this can skew traffic and conversion numbers. So your Google Analytics views should include internal IP filtering, so the data reports don't include employee or partner traffic. It's best practice to have an unfiltered view for reference purposes. This is usually called an all-site data view. It doesn't have any filters applied, so you always have a baseline to report against.

Remember, everything you are tracking in Google Analytics is to help you deliver on key performance indicators or KPIs. So, before you begin analyzing your campaign data, it's important to define your KPIs so that the campaign's effectiveness can be benchmarked against these metrics. Likewise, it's essential that goals are set up in Google Analytics as a way of measuring these KPIs.

The final word on website analytics is to consider the importance of appropriately tracking offline as well as online marketing activity. Not all purchases or actions happen online. So it's important to track how offline factors can influence user behavior and conversions, so you can take the appropriate action and make more informed decisions.

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WALKTHROUGH: GOOGLE ANALYTICS 4

So, what we're looking at here is the latest iteration of Google Analytics: Google Analytics 4.

The last time that Google updated their Analytics product was back in 2012 when we moved from Classic Analytics to Universal Analytics. And that migration took a couple of years for a lot of companies to kind of get on board with it and for all of the different systems to properly update from the Classic Analytic system to a Universal Analytic system.

So, we would expect it will take a bit of time for a lot of companies to migrate from the current version of Universal Analytics into this new Google Analytics 4 interface. So we have a similar looking interface in the sense that like it does look kind OF like the original Analytics that we're all used to.

We have our left-hand menu here with different areas but a couple of different reports. So obviously we have this Acquisition report which is familiar but we also have this new Engagement, Monetization and Retention reports. We have this Demographics and Tech report for mobile and understanding of our audience. And we have this Conversions report which is based on events.

So, event tracking within your website interface. Google Analytics 4 is trying to move away from using cookies as a means to gather user information on websites. It's going to use a combination of cookies and artificial intelligence and machine learning to plug the gaps between what we're seeing with our cookie tracking and what is expected via forecasting with ai and machine learning.

So, let's take a look around the interface here. So, our Realtime interface is quite cool, it kind of looks like this, so we've got a map of the world, who's on site right now, different traffic sources, different pages, all things like that. So, it's quite a user friendly, quite a very slick interface in terms of who's on the site right now. We also have this Acquisition report which we'll be familiar with so Traffic Acquisition will show us where our traffic is coming from.

We can see this in the charts and indeed the bar charts, where the sources are. In our Engagement levels we can look at our Overview to see how people are engaging. Likewise, for e-commerce clients we have Monetization and we have Retention aspects which we can look at too. So then within Demographics we have our overview of our demographics here, our gender, our location, different things like that. And then within our Tech area we have an overview of how people are accessing our content.

So what Google Analytics 4 aims to do is to unify app usage and web usage. So currently this experience is only counting web usage, but when there's apps involved and when there's other kind of technology involved, we'll be able to see all of the different technology types that this particular business is engaging its audience with. We can look at Conversions. So different Conversions that happen on the site these are based on Events. Events that are auto populated into the Google Analytics 4 interface.

So, Google Analytics will automatically pick up a number of Events, a number of different automatic types of Events, and we can then set these as Conversions as we see fit. So, clicks and downloads and visits, all of these are automatic events that are picked up by the system and then these GA4 ones we have set here look to be ones that are set up using something like Google Tag Manager.

And then we have these other ones which are also automatic so a combination of Google Tag Manager and automatic events allows us to set them as Conversions. So then in our Analysis hub we

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have these different templates or reports that we can use to kind of create dashboards and reports and hopefully derive a good bit of insight from the combination of machine learning,

AI and cookie technology that is available within Google Analytics 4. In the bottom left corner just as before we have our admin area where we can adjust our settings, get our tracking code, and set up different configurations with our Google Analytics 4 property. So, it's an interesting time ahead. It's going to be an interesting platform to use when they work out the bugs, and when it is supported and finally adopted by the wider internet community.

For the moment, it's definitely worth testing a second Google Analytics 4 profile, alongside your existing Universal Analytics profile to start gathering data now, and building up a picture of your audience to help with the AI and machine learning going forward. So, something for the future, and certainly something to think about.

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